

June 17, 2002

VIA FACSIMILE

The Honorable Bill Thomas
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
2208 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Thomas:

On behalf of the 113 hospital members of the Mississippi Hospital Association, I am writing to offer our support of the provider provisions in the latest draft of Medicare legislation developed by the House Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce Committees and to express our appreciation for involving hospitals in crafting the package.

Mississippi's hospitals are facing extreme pressures due to the nursing shortage, bioterrorism preparedness requirements and health care liability premium increases. In addition, the Medicaid upper payment limit rule will eliminate about \$43 million a year in payments to hospitals in the state. The draft Medicare provider package, according to the outline we have seen, offers a strong first step in strengthening the cracking foundation of Mississippi's hospitals.

Again, thank you for your efforts and your continued support for hospitals, which are essential to the health of every community. We look forward to working with you to move this package through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

Sam W. Cameron
President/CEO

SWC/ans